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# THE CORRESPONDENT.

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MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

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EDITED BY GEORGE HOUSTON.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### WATSON REFUTED.

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#### LETTER XII.

I have now followed your animadversions on the objections of Thomas Paine on the Old Testament; and I trust I have shewn that you have in no degree been a more successful labourer in the cause of Judaism than your predecessors. Even your wonderful prophesy of Daniel is converted into a mere historical tale; and the application Jesus Christ makes of it to himself is accordingly proved to be ridiculous; the more so, as it comes from the son of God.

I have a few more observations to make before I leave this book. I cannot pass in silence the gross blunder you have committed, when you refer Mr. Paine to Ferguson for an astronomical proof of the miracle of the total darkness at the crucifixion of Jesus. An odd conceit, upon my word! You might know that the event is omitted by all the authors of eminence who wrote at that time; that even Pliny passes it unnoticed. Lest you should mislead the reader with your groundless assertions, I shall state the matter as it stands in reality. You avoid learned disquisitions to be intelligible, but you ought not to be so deficient of authority where it is most needed. Besides the gospels, the darkness is not mentioned in any author; but divines have attempted to prove the event from a supposed passage of Phlegon, related by Eusebius; it is in the following words: "In the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, there was the greatest eclipse ever seen; it was night at six, and even the stars could be seen."

This passage has long been disregarded by men of knowledge; it alludes to an eclipse, not to a miraculous darkness. Both Mr. Ferguson and you have blundered in chronology and astronomy. It is certain, in the year of Christ's crucifixion, according to the common chronology, there could have been no eclipse of the sun visible at that time at Jerusalem: Ferguson, therefore, concludes it a miracle. But you ought to have known, that the fourth year of the two hundred and second Olympiad, is not the year of the crucifixion in any system of chronology; that there was an eclipse of the sun, in the year mentioned by Phlegon, in the month of November, which however, was not central; and you know that Jesus is said to have died at the time of the full moon in March, or

in the beginning of April. Besides, had even such a darkness taken place, are you ignorant of the existence of comets, and would not one passing between the earth and the sun eclipse that luminary? Have not such miracles taken place if we credit historians? The death of Cæsar was preceded by wonderful prodigies, and a comet made its appearance immediately after. The supposed miraculous influence of comets, and their being prophetic signs, was once an article of faith throughout all Europe, and the ancient history of every country records many events which the authors maintain arose from comets.

Your reflections on prophets I cannot pass unnoticed. You pretend to make a distinction between dreamers, and impostors, and true prophets. You acknowledge the number of soothsayers and fortune-tellers among the Jews; but you maintain that they were altogether distinct from the true prophets, and appeal to Jeremiah, who puts the Jews on their guard against false prophets. Does not every quack, every impostor, do the same, and caution the world to beware of counterfeits? You might have saved a great deal of trouble, had you condescended to produce your proofs of the genuineness of the writings of the prophets; and then we might enquire concerning the works of these augurs. You pretend that a sure mark of the reality of a prophet is his predicting bad things, for a fortune-teller always prophesies good. Pardon me if I suppose you a follower of Mr. Brothers. For surely the destruction of London was not a most desirable event. It is in vain you attempt to turn Mr. Paine into ridicule for his definition of a prophet. He most justly calls them strolling-poets, fortune-tellers; being in Judea what the gipsies, the augurs, and the astrologers have been in other nations. The Hebrew word *Navi* signifies nothing but an orator, a public speaker, and is by the Jews applied, in a forced way, to soothsayers and diviners. It is incontrovertible that they existed among the Jews in colleges, and were brought up to the business. Their chief employment was to write the chronicles of the times. The name prophet is given in the bible indiscriminately with that of holy man. Among the Hebrews, the first book of Kings, was called the prophesy of Samuel. Abel is called repeatedly in the New Testament, a prophet, (see Matth. chap. xxiii. ver. 31 and 35, and Luke chap. xi. ver. 50 and 51,) although we have no account of his having predicted any. Among the Jews there certainly were fortune-tellers, necromancers, and witches, all of which you rank among the impostors. But had not the witch of Endor a real power of incantation? Did she not most wonderfully raise up the spirit of Samuel? Or are we to look upon the story of the witch of Endor in the same light as those of modern witches? That the prophets of the Jews were repeatedly deceived, we cannot have the smallest doubt when 400 of these gentlemen told a downright lie to Ahaz. But you have a very easy expedient in all these cases. When a prophet tells a lie, you may, as was done in this particular case, attribute it to a design of God to cheat the person, who consults his oracles, just as Jupiter did of old to Agamemnon when he sent him the false dream.

You reproach Thomas Paine for want of candour. He has not, you say, examined the general design of the old testament. There he would find the benevolence of the God of the Jews, and his infinite goodness in

selecting them from among the nations, in preserving them from idolatry. If he chose this people, he has certainly exposed them to continual sufferings, and all for no other purpose than to teach mankind that idolatry is the greatest of crimes; that to avoid it, murder, plunder, the crusades, the inquisition, persecution, may all be laudable means for the preservation of the faith of nations. Thus, the cherished people, who were most intimate with their God, committed the most enormous crimes, under the pretence of preserving pure their adoration of the implacable God Jehovah. Did not all the endeavours of Jehovah to rescue nations from idolatry prove fruitless? This despicable creature man, has been able to effect what mighty Jehovah never accomplished. Science is the only antidote against all kinds of superstition. Did Cicero adore stocks or stones? Or did ever any learned man among the heathens humble himself before idols? Has not the principal branch of the church of Christ been notorious idolaters?

But what avails all this? Have you proved that the heathens "emulated in the transcendant flagitiousness of their lives, the impure morals of their gods?" You assert it; but unluckily it is one of the many unsupported and unassumed propositions in your pamphlet. Did nations necessarily imitate the conduct of their gods, I would tremble at being among the followers of the bloody Jehovah. The heathens were certainly dreamers in their adorations of the planets; we are taught by science, that these bodies resemble our earth in the general laws that govern them. It was natural for rude men to gaze at the sublimity of the stupendous fabric, the refulgency of the sun; the blessings derived from his genial influence could not be contemplated without admiration by the amazed and fearful savage. Idolatry is ridiculous: but have you proved that Jehovah deserves more to be revered than the Great Whole of nature, whether called Pan, or otherwise disguised in emblems, than the harmony of the planets designed by symbols, the generative powers by Venus, or the vivifying light emanating from the bright orb of Apollo? Confess at least, that the allegorical adoration of nature could only deceive the multitude who were kept in ignorance by their priests. If you are candid, you must acknowledge, that the polytheists were tolerant, that the atheists or deists lectured close to the temple. They did not exterminate nations, establish inquisitions, murder unbelievers, as the Jews, and the Christians; although, as you observe, they received the gift of God through Jesus Christ, and were made alive by the covenant of grace.

In what consists the superiority of the Jewish or Christian notions of God? Jehovah is a being incomprehensible; he is a jealous and a revengeful God, he hardens men's hearts, and sacrifices whole nations to a particular people, who, in their turn, are sacrificed for the boasted scheme of general good, which is never the nearer being accomplished. He must be adored and revered, and yet he does not make himself known to man. He does not even shew himself face to face to any but Moses. You pay no great compliment to his omnipotence, when you observe, that "probably he could not give to such a being as man a full manifestation of the end for which he designs him, nor of the means requisite for that end;"—and, "that it may not be possible for the father



of the universe to explain to us, infants in apprehension, the goodness and the wisdom of his dealings with the sons of men." Jehovah, in short, equally the offspring of fancy with the heathen Jupiter, is as cruel as Moloch, and, like other productions of the brain, an invisible phantom, to which priests give the passions of a tyrant; and, in their desire that he should reign alone, that men should not worship other deities, his ministers have preached up this God, and the multitude, eager to admire what they cannot comprehend, have followed the mandates of the pretended interpreters of his will. Still, however, the greatest number of ignorant men are, and will ever be, idolaters; in vain their spiritual guides preach up incomprehensible and ideal beings in an unintelligible jargon; man will always seek to satisfy his senses. Even the immediate presence of Jehovah, and his horrid massacres, could not prevent the favorite nation from following other gods. Even the inspired, the wise, the royal Solomon forsook "the God of Israel, holy, just, and good," for "the impure rabble of heathen Baalim."

According to your notions, according to the doctrines of the Jewish and the Christian churches, the sole aim of God has been to be exclusively adored, and jealousy is his prominent feature. It is not in the pursuit of knowledge, or in the practice of morality that he delights. The precepts of social virtue occasionally scattered through the old, as well as the new testament, can make little impression when contrasted with the vindictive cruelty of the deity. The Jewish Jehovah requires nothing of his followers but their compliance in executing his bloody commands against the nations whom he calls impious, because he has not revealed himself to them. The man after his own heart, is the murderer of thousands of innocent people. Christ orders his followers to despise the reason he has given them, to avoid pleasure, to hate the world, and to love pain, to pray, and to spend their lives in continual mortification, and in gazing over unintelligible mysteries to acquire his kingdom. If they fail to believe in him, whether from ignorance or conviction, he punishes them with eternal damnation, or, as *Saint Athanasius* emphatically expresses it in his celebrated creed, "Whosoever believeth in these things shall be saved; and whosoever believeth not shall be damned."

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#### RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS.

Mr. Editor—Notwithstanding all that has been said and written as to the impolicy, inconsistency, and injustice of tormenting our fellow-men on account of difference in opinions on religious subjects, it is an undeniable fact that the *spirit* of persecution exists to as great an extent in the United States, even under a republican government, as it formerly did when the intolerant statutes of a foreign despotism were in full operation amongst us. The cause of this is evidently the machinations of the priesthood, who finding themselves divested of power to inflict corporal punishment, endeavour to strengthen themselves among their own particular sect, by infusing into their minds a horror and detestation of all those who do not subscribe to their religious dogmas—Hence the prevalence of that hostility which pervades all classes of society; and

which will continue to exist so long as the clergy find it their interest to delude the multitude. What then is to be done to remedy this monstrous evil? What are the means which those who are alive to its desolating influence, should employ to counteract it? To me it appears that the only way this can be effected is to instruct mankind as to their true interests; to point out to them the folly of injuring each other for mere matters of opinion, to exhibit in their genuine colours the frauds practised by these spiritual and interested guides; and to convince them of the necessity of adopting, as a rule of conduct, those *rational* principles which experience has demonstrated, are alone calculated to promote the happiness of their species.

I am aware that this has been the object of the *Correspondent* since its commencement; and I am also persuaded that your efforts have been productive of much good to society. Still it seems to me that the more frequent topics of this nature are freely discussed, the greater is the certainty that mankind will become more tolerant. Under these impressions, I have to request the publication in your paper of the accompanying "Thoughts on the Inconsistency of Religious Persecutions," which first appeared in London (in the pamphlet form) in the year 1819; but, so far as I have been able to learn, have not been since re-printed. The author is unknown, though, had he given his name to the public, he had no occasion to be ashamed of the production:

Yours, &c. OBSERVATOR.

The man who attempts to stand forward in opposition to the opinions of mankind, which have been held by their ancestors as sacred, and received by them as genuine, braves a world of difficulties; he has to combat a second nature, custom and education. Great as the difficulty appears by reflection; much as the bigotry of man may be increased by my feeble effort to burst asunder the chain of superstition, which has bound them down to a savage barbarity, yet I feel a conscious pleasure in the reflection, that my intention is to pour the balm of consolation on those wounds which enthusiastic madness has left still bleeding in the human frame. Should my efforts be crowned with success; should my first attempt be the means of weakening that religious rancour which man, differing from his brother, nourishes in his bosom, I shall be amply repaid. If I fail, I shall enjoy the pleasing reflection of a good intention.

From my earliest contemplations of the actions of men, I have been struck with wonder and surprise at the religious animosities which they have nourished against each other; and I have marked with amazement and horror the settled rancour and antipathy which their infatuated hearts bore against their fellow-men. I beheld them perpetrate every act of cruelty against each other which the laws of their country would suffer, and letting slip no opportunity of revenge on which their malice could lay hold off by words or actions.

I have attended the religious worship and lectures of the different sectaries calling themselves christians, and have conversed with the followers of Moses. I have examined the tenets of the creeds of each, and though differing materially from each other, in all I found something to admire; yet was my admiration blasted by the settled animosity which

I discovered ever uppermost in the whole. If my mind has been hurt by reviewing the actions of the laity, how much greater cause had I to be astonished at the conduct of those men, who, calling themselves the appointed ministers of the deity, and the disciples and followers of Jesus, whom they describe as teaching a doctrine of love and submission, even to the receiving of a blow on the cheek without a murmur, and who, believing in a system of rewards and punishments to eternity, could boldly declare, that all who differ from them should be damned forever!

The more I examined the devout and select of each system, the more I became acquainted with the secret tenets of their faith, the deeper have I found the root of hatred sown; till, tired and disgusted with the search, my mind has recoiled, and I have asked myself, 'Are these the actions of man, who boasts himself the image of the deity? Or is the idea true, that infernals can assume the form of men?'

Is hatred the result of that religion which pretends to teach love? Or is man degenerated from his ancestors, and in love with malice? I will turn, I exclaimed, from the people of the present day; I will search in the ancient page of history; I will ask of the monuments of the dead what was their belief, and how they acted. I have complied with my exclamation, and my mind has been racked with distraction by the search. Before the era of the christians, I beheld the Pagan world destroying each other about the worship of an idol, the prophesy of an oracle, or the words of a Sybil. I see the followers of Moses, after destroying the inhabitants of a land who differed from them in worship, split into factions, and destroying each other from the same motives.

On turning to the followers of Mahomet, I find the same faction, the same religious animosity prevail; till, having filled the world with carnage and blood for twelve hundred years, we now find them split into sectaries, each ready to destroy the other, because they differ as to certain enets.

On viewing the history of the christian church, I find still greater cruelties and horrors present themselves, as if (to use a figurative expression of the christians,) the infernals had ransacked hell for the tortures of the damned to inflict on the living. To paint the scenes of animosity, malice, carnage, bloodshed, and torture, which the followers of Christ have practised on each other, for the honor of Jesus, and the salvation of the christian religion, from its commencement to the present day, would be a task which the age of man, if doubled, would fall far short of performing: suffice it to say, that few commotions have taken place, but what religion has either directly or indirectly been the cause.

No sooner has a religious faction gained power, than its first action is to oppress or destroy those who differ from them, while the persecuted, in turn, practise the same cruelties. Nor does their malice vent itself in the ordinary way; here every kind of torture which the imagination of man can devise is invented, to destroy or torment those whom they conceive their enemies, till it has settled in the regular and systematic plan of a hellish inquisition: where, for daring to doubt or call in question the doctrines of those authorized ministers of the church, you are dragged from your home, your wife, and children, and buried forever from the light of day.



But, you will exclaim, this is not the practice of this country; we have no inquisition here. Refer, my friends, to your own history, and see if it does not present you with actions almost equal to them; trace it through all its winding paths, from the first destruction of the Druids, the burning of the catholics, protestants, and presbyterians, down to the ever-memorable riots, fires, and destruction of the catholics of London, in the year 1780, and the presbyterians of Birmingham, in 1792; then take a survey of the followers of Christ in this country, divided and subdivided in their creeds, each believing themselves only to be right, and condemning every other sect to torture, while they practise every animosity against each other who might lie within their compass. View the evils at present existing through this false notion on your own island, bring it next to your own town, and lastly, look to the circle of your own acquaintance; pry into the secret recesses of your own heart, and ask yourself if you know a greater evil to the human race?

*To be continued.*

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### NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1828.

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Several complaints having been made as to the *late* appearance of the last number of the *Correspondent*, I feel it incumbent on me to state, that the delay was occasioned by a premeditated plan, or conspiracy, on the part of the enemies of liberal principles, to destroy my establishment. A mere accident prevented the completion of their project; but as it was, the publication of the paper was, for the first time since its commencement, considerably retarded, and a heavy pecuniary loss entailed on me. I am much pleased to find that a disposition exists amongst my subscribers to relieve me of this loss. The writer of the following letter has my warmest acknowledgments, for the very prompt and handsome manner in which he has volunteered the necessary aid:—

New-York, November 8th, 1828.

Mr. Houston; dear sir—I have just received information that through a recent transaction, in which christian persecution was conspicuous, you have suffered a loss which has caused your paper to be delayed, and will, perhaps, render its continuance doubtful.

As a testimony of my respect for your private worth, and of the estimation in which I hold your indefatigable perseverance in diffusing mental emancipation, and establishing correct principles upon a permanent basis in our priest ridden country, I with pleasure request you to accept the enclosed *three dollars*, which is a trifle that (though I am not one of fortunes' favorites,) I think I can spare more easily than you can bear your misfortunes; and I hope your other subscribers, and the friends of the cause which you advocate so ably, will cheerfully and promptly follow the example, by contributing in proportion to their circumstances.

Respectfully yours, S. E. L.

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#### TRACT SOCIETY.

The "Western Recorder," of the 4th inst., contains a doleful lamentation on the daily increasing debt of the "American Tract Society," oc-

casioned, as is stated, by the luke-warmness of the original contributors, and particularly by the auxiliary societies throughout the country, whose transmissions of money to the great head establishment in this city, have of late become so trifling, when compared with former periods, as actually to create alarm in the minds of the pious, for the stability of the institution. "A crisis has now come (says the writer) in the affairs of the society, which must be promptly met, or it will be told, to the everlasting shame of the followers of Christ, that they suffered an institution to languish, whose usefulness has already been immense, and which might, and ought to have increased a thousand fold." In the month of July last, when the debt of the society amounted to \$15,000, a powerful appeal was made to the "christian world," to aid in liquidating this sum; but the "christian world," it appears, felt no longer disposed to put their hands into their pockets; for instead of the "executive committee" being able to reduce the debt, it had increased \$10,000 in September last; and "on the 20th of October, it was found that the obligations against the society, due within six months, amounted to \$17,000."

After making this exposition, and, in the true spirit of modern cant and hypocrisy, deploring the injury which the "benighted" parts of the globe must sustain from the want of means to send tracts amongst them, the writer utters the following tirade against the inhabitants of Utica, as if they alone were the only persons who had withheld the "silver and gold" called for: "But what has been done in Utica and its vicinity the past year? With a society embracing upwards of seventy auxiliaries—with abundant wealth in the hands of christians, the remittances to the parent society, during the year ending May, 1828, were only \$224, averaging a little over three dollars to an auxiliary. Might not Utica itself remit annually more than five times that sum, without feeling the sacrifice? The Utica society, during the first year of its operations, remitted \$1420. Does this look like 'forgetting the things which are behind, and pressing toward the mark?' No wonder that the parent society is embarrassed, when its efforts are so poorly seconded by its friends and patrons."

The truth is, and the tract society committee know it, not only in Utica but all along the line of the canal, from Troy to Buffalo, not to mention any other part of the United States, a stand has been taken against the encroachments of the priesthood, which must, at no very distant period, terminate in their entire discomfiture. Nor is this owing, as the superstitionists would insinuate, to apathy or indifference on the part of the public respecting their true interests, but has its origin in the overbearing disposition of the clergy, who in every country, and in all ages, have been more remarkable for their dogmatical and arrogant spirit, than for that humility, which they prate so much about in the pulpit, but which we look for in vain in their intercourse with their fellow-men. We might cite from a dozen of letters now before us in proof of these facts; let an extract from one, however, suffice. It is from a highly esteemed correspondent, and dated

Syracuse, Nov. 3, 1828.

"It will no doubt be gratifying to you to learn that liberal principles are getting a foothold even in Ithica! yes, even in that priest ridden,



priest cursed place, the village of Ithica; where no man, (this is a fact) let his conduct be as pure as the angels, could get a living by his occupation unless he became a member of the church. The fact is, that the present is an auspicious time for the liberals to bestir themselves. The public mind in this part of the country has been much excited, and evidently much disgusted by the late attempt of the fanatics to *dictate*, as they assume to do, in matters of dealing and business, between individuals of the same neighborhood who do, and who do not, observe a religious Sabbath day. The establishment of the "Pioneer Stages," taken in connexion with what they have so foolishly published, has, probably, done as much injury to their cause, and hastened its downfall more than the unreimitted exertions of the liberals could have been able to effect in one fourth of a century."

It has been observed by an intelligent writer, that "it is the province of error, particularly religious error, to fortify itself against conviction, and when detected, to fly for refuge to the strong hold of recrimination." In no case was the truth of these observations more completely verified, than in the present.—Forgetting what he had said as to the supineness of the citizens of Utica, being the only cause of the failure in the contributions from that place, the writer indulges in a strain of the most indecent invective against the "Free Press Association," to whose publications and lectures he attributes (and we will not deny the charge,) the change that has taken place so fatal to the interest of the priesthood. "Now (he asks) what is to be done? Will not christians awake to the importance of this subject? Will they remain inactive, with the knowledge of the cheering and animating encouragements they have, to press onward in this high and holy enterprise? Shall the "*Free Press Association*" scatter their *vile and blasphemous* publications throughout this community, and deliver lectures against our holy religion, even in the sacred halls of justice, without any thing like an adequate effort being made to send out a counteracting influence? *Infidelity is the same fierce and subtle spirit now*, which a few years ago *wasted* the nations of Europe. It is yet so much restrained in this country, by public opinion, that its progress is *serpentine*; but it leaves its *polluting slime* upon every thing it touches. Let it gather a little more strength, and it will leap up from its *grovelling posture*, and its effects will be seen in *desolation and blood*. Already it is *withering up the moral virtues* of a host of young men, and weakening the salutary restraints of law and religion."

We have so often pointed out the folly of our opponents indulging in the language of vituperation, instead of meeting us in the fair field of argument, that it would be a waste of time to animadvert on a paragraph, like the above, teeming as it does with bitter hostility against every one engaged in stripping hypocrisy of its mask. We shall, therefore, leave the writer to the full enjoyment of his own malignant feelings, determined, as we are, to pursue a course which, the effects it has already produced has demonstrated, is well calculated to prostrate the bulwarks of priestcraft, and to render mankind truly free and happy.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

*Holy wrestling.*—In the year 1673, when the Dutch made themselves masters of all the coast from St. Salvador to the river of the Amazons, a Jesuit of the name of Anthony Vieira, preached a discourse in one of the churches of Bahia, which in point of folly and rant, is not inferior to any production of the present day, whether in cathedral, stable, or barn. Vieira took for his text the end of the 43d psalm: "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? wherefore hidest thou thy face from us—and forgettest our affection and tribulations? Awake, come to our help; think of the glory of thy name, and save us."

It is by these words, full of firm piety and religious boldness—it is thus, said the orator, that the prophetic king enters his protest, instead of praying, while he addresses the deity; and since times and circumstances are the same, I also will be bold to say, "Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?" Vieira, after having shewn the similarity of the affections of Israel and the Portuguese, adds, "It is not the people to whom I shall preach this day; my voice and my words shall ascend on high: my ambition is to penetrate even to the throne of God. This is the last day of the octave, when every church in the metropolis offers up prayers before the sacred altars; and since it is the last day, so it becomes us to have recourse to the last and only remedy. The preachers of the gospel have laboured in vain to bring you to repentance. But, since *you* have been *deaf*; since they have not converted *you*; it is thee, O Lord, that I shall convert; and though we be sinners, it is thou who shalt repent. When the children of Israel had committed a crime in the desert, by worshipping the golden calf, thou revealedst it to Moses, and added, in thy wrath, that thou wouldst annihilate that ungrateful people. Moses answered, 'Why is thy indignation kindled against thy people? consider whether the action is worthy of thyself, before thou punishest them severely. Wouldst thou have the Egyptians to accuse thee of having maliciously redeemed us from slavery only to exterminate us in the wilderness? think of the glory of thy name.' Such was the language of Moses, and such shall also be mine.

"Repent then of the project that thou hadst formed. Thou art still the same; and as my reasons are stronger than those of the Hebrew legislator, they will have the same effect upon thee. If thou hadst destined us to perish, thou wilt certainly repent of it. Art thou ignorant that, already, the heretics, swelling with the success that thou hadst granted them, say that it is to the errors of our worship that they owe their victories and thy protection; and what dost thou imagine will the Gentiles that surround us, think of it? The Talopien who has not yet known thee, the inconstant Indian, the ignorant and stупed Egyptian, hardly sprinkled with the water of baptism, are these people able to fathom and adore the depth of thy judgment? Awake, then, and if thou hast any regard for thy glory, let our defeat furnish them with arguments against our belief. Awake, and let the tempests which have scattered our fleet,

disperse that of our common enemy. Let the pestilences and diseases which have melted away our armies, also reduce theirs; and since thou art pleased sometimes to confound human councils, let theirs be full of darkness and confusion.

“Joshua was more patient and more holy than we, whilst his language was the same in circumstances far less important. He crosses Jourdan, he attacks the city of Ai; his troops are dispersed: his defeat, however, was but trifling, and yet we see him tearing his garments, rolling on the ground, spreading bitter complaints, and crying out, ‘Why were we made to cross the Jourdan? say, O Lord, was it only to deliver us a prey to the Amorites?’ and I, when a great people in an extensive country, is in danger; shall I not cry out? Hast thou given us this land only to take it from us again? If thou hast designed it for the Dutch, why didst thou not call them to it before it was cultivated? Have heretics rendered thee such great service; and are we so odious in thy sight that thou shouldst bring us from our own country to clear this land for them, to build cities for their use, and to enrich them by our labour? See, then, the recompense that thou hast meditated for so many men slain by land, or who have perished in the deep: however, so it must be, if thou hast determined it. But I forewarn thee, that this people whom thou rejectest, whom thou afflictest to-day, to-morrow thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them.

“Doubtless, I would not that we should be more insensible than Job, when loaded with afflictions, he contended with thee, and said, ‘Since thou art determined to ruin me, accomplish it—kill me, annihilate me, let me be buried and reduced to dust, I consent, but to-morrow thou shalt seek me and find me not. The Sabeans, the Chaldeans, blasphemers of thy name, shall remain; but Job, thy faithful servant, who adores thee, thou shalt see him no more.’ Well, Lord, I say to thee with Job, burn, destroy, consume us; but one day, perhaps to-morrow, thou shalt seek the Portuguese, and seek them in vain. Will the Dutch, by thy counsel, furnish thee with apostolic conquerors, who shall carry the standard of the cross throughout the world, at the hazard of their lives? Will the Dutch establish seminaries of apostolic preachers unto thee? Who shall hasten to sprinkle barbarous countries with their blood for the interest of thy faith? Will the Dutch erect temples pleasing to thy mind? Will they raise altars upon which thou wilt descend? Will they consecrate a true ministry who will offer up the great sacrifice to thee, and render thee a worship worthy of thyself? No, no, the worship which thou wilt receive from them, will be the same which is practised daily at Amsterdam, Middleburgh, and Flushing, and in the other provinces of that cold and damp hell.

“I know, Lord, that the propagation of thy faith, and the interests of thy glory, does not depend on us, and that if mankind were annihilated, thy omnipotence, animating stones, could raise up children to Abraham. I know also, that since Adam thou hast not created any new species of men; that thy designs are accomplished by those which are in being, and that thou dost not admit into thy councils a lesser good, but for want of a better: witness the parable of the banquet—invite the blind and the lame; behold the ways of thy providence; wilt thou change at this



time? We are the guests that have been invited, and we have not refused our attendance at the feast, and yet thou preferest the blind and the lame, lutherians and calvinists, blind in faith and lame in works. If it should be our misfortune to be driven from Brazil, I would represent to thee with becoming humility, but respectfully, that thou wouldst consider well before the sentence is put in execution: weigh maturely what may be the result to thyself; consider while it is time. If repentance must follow, it would be better now, than when the evil cannot be prevented. Thou seest the design of this discourse; for the reasons used in this remonstrance are drawn from thy own conduct. Before the deluge thou wert angry with the children of men, and notwithstanding Noah continued praying to thee for a whole century, thou continuedst in thy wrath. The cataracts of heaven burst at last; the waters flowed above the mountains; the earth was one continued deluge, and thy justice was satisfied. But three days afterwards, when the bodies of men floated on the surface of the waters; when thy eyes were arrested by the multitude of livid carcasses; when the sea offered the most sorrowful and frightful spectacle that ever afflicted the view of angels, what didst thou do? Struck with the picture, as if thou hadst not foreseen it, thy bowels yearned with grief: thou repentedst of having made the world; thou regrettedst the past and formed resolutions for the future. Such is thy nature; and since this is thy character, why dost thou not spare us? Why art thou at present enraged, when thou mayst afterwards repent it, and when the execution of thy justice may afflict thy goodness. Think before you begin, and consider the consequences of the new deluge which thou hast projected. I shall describe them to thee:

"Suppose Bahea, and the rest of Brazil, to become a prey to the Dutch—see them entering into the city with the rage of conquerors, and the fury of heretics; see them spare neither age nor sex; see the blood run in streams; the guilty and innocent women and children, all put to the sword; I see the tears of virgins all deploring the injuries they have suffered; and the ancients of the people dragged at the horses tails. Hear the confused cries of monks and nuns, and of priests, who embracing their altars, lift up their hands towards thee. Thou, thyself, O Lord, shall not escape their violence. Yes, thou also shalt have thy share. The heretics shall break open thy temples; the host, thy own body, shall be trodden under foot; the cup which thy blood hath filled, will serve for their debauch; thy altars shall be overturned; thy images broken down; they will lay their sacriligious hands on thy mother.

"That these affronts should be offered to thee, and that thou shouldst suffer, does not astonish me, because thou hast suffered more heretofore. But thy mother! where is thy filial piety? Why didst thou take the life of Hoze for having touched the ark? The arm which Jeroboam lifted up against the prophet, thou driedst up; and yet heretics have thousands of arms left, which they have forfeited by more atrocious actions. Thou didst dethrone and put to death Balthazar, for having drank in cups wherein thy blood was never consecrated, and yet thou sparest the heretic; nor is there a hand to trace his sentence of death.

"Finally, O Lord, when thy temples shall be spoiled, thy altars destroyed, thy religion extinct in Brazil, and thy worship interrupted; when

the grass shall grow on the pavement of churches ; christmas shall come without any person even remembering the day of thy birth ; easter and the holy week shall come, and the mysteries of thy passion shall not be celebrated ; the stones of our streets shall sigh like those of the solitary streets of Jerusalem ; the priests, the sacraments, and the holy sacrifices, shall be no more ; heresy shall take possession of the chair of truth ; the children of the Portuguese shall be infected with false doctrine ; in those days it will be asked of the children of those who now hear me, ' of what religion are you ? ' and they will answer, ' we are presbyterians ; ' and our little girls, and they shall say, ' we are lutherans. ' Then thou shalt soften and repent ; and since regret awaits you, why do you not prevent it ?

" But tell me, what pleasure can you take in destroying one nation, and in causing it to be supplanted by another—a power which thou once confided to an insignificant inhabitant of Anatha ? In our punishment thou triumphest over weakness ; but in forgiving us thou overcomest thyself. Be merciful, therefore, for thy own glory, and the honor of thy name. Let not thy wrath continue forever ; nor even for one day. Thou forbiddest to let the sun set upon *our* anger ; but how often has it both risen and set on thine ? Dost thou exact from us a moderation which thou hast not thyself, and dost thou give us a precept without example ? Forgive us, then, O Lord, cause our miseries to pass away. Holy virgin intercede for us, supplicate thy son—command him. If he is enraged against us for our offences, tell him that he should remit them to us, even as he hath enjoined us by his law, to forgive those who hath offended us."

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*Pilgrimages by proxy.*—The custom of performing pilgrimages by proxy was, perhaps, a consequence of the christian doctrine, that an individual might, on some occasions, depute his religious duties to others without detriment to himself. Generally, however, these pilgrimages were performed only after the demise of the person to whom they referred, though a few instances occur of their taking place in his lifetime. Provisions for these post obit pilgrimages are frequently met within the wills of distinguished persons, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. In the early instances, they were commonly directed to Rome or Jerusalem, and in these cases were committed to priests, who were directed to pray, or sing masses at all convenient places by the way. But in later ages, like other pilgrimages, they were more commonly made to domestic shrines, and appear to have been intrusted to simple laymen. A pious lady, whose will is printed in Bloomfield's Norfolk, provides for a pilgrim to visit, after her death, no less than eight different shrines within that country. It is probable, from the low rate at which these spiritual commissions were generally paid, that the same person undertook several of them at once. In the will of Lady Cecily Gerbridge, in 1418, only ten marks are left for a pilgrim to visit Rome ; and in another, that of Gardener, bishop of Norwich, in 1508, only twelve marks are left for the same pilgrimage, with the condition of singing at Rome there for thirteen weeks. In some few cases, the executors of a will were directed to give certain sums to all pilgrims, without distinction, who were willing

to undertake an assigned pilgrimage for the deceased. The same system of vicarious duty prevailed in the crusades; but at the first the privilege of deputation was confined to persons of the same rank. A father often bequeathed a crusade to his son, and left him by will, certain funds for his expenses; and the son again, perhaps, satisfied his conscience by transferring his own heirs. This delay, however, arose partly from the long intermission of crusades, in which alone such hostile service could be performed; and the duty thus often continued to be acknowledged for several generations. In the will of Sir Roger Beauchamp, in 1379, he confesses that, by the devise of his grandfather, he was bound to do service in the holy land, to the expense of two hundred marks; but having never performed it, he now transferred the duty, with the funds for it, to his grandson, to discharge for him.

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*Religious pretensions.*—According to the Christians, there is no salvation, no getting up to heaven, no escaping hell; a place no one knows where situate, whether in the sun or the nucleus of a comet; but by Christ. Now the Hindoos believe not in Christ but in Vistnoo, a God of their own making; therefore the Hindoos cannot get to heaven. The Musselmans believe in Mahomet; but Mahomet was an impostor according to the Christians; therefore the Musselmans cannot get to heaven. According to the Protestants, idolaters cannot get to heaven; but according to the same protestants, the Roman Catholics worship images; therefore the poor Catholics cannot get to heaven. According to the Catholics, there is no salvation but within the pale of their church, at the head of which his holiness of Rome presides, as vicar of Jesus Christ on earth; therefore, the protestants, being without the pale of the church of Rome, must all be damned. According to the Jews, Christians are impostors; and the impostor and his followers must both perish; therefore both sects of Christian, Catholics and Protestants must go headlong to the devil. And for the same reason the Musselmans may go to the devil also. In what religion then is salvation to be found?

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A *bigot* is always an indifferent neighbour, and a bad friend. He is attached to none but such as have adopted his own little views; and whenever a bigot has official influence, he exercises it to the prejudice of those over whom he has power. In proportion to the influence of the bigot, so in proportion is the harm that results from his power. A bigot is always biassed by the worst prejudices; he can never judge with the required partiality.

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*All religions intolerant.*—The miseries which have been entailed on the nations of the earth by propagating creeds with the sword, faggot, torture and imprisonments, are fast dispelling by the genuine spirit of philosophy and free inquiry.—The religion of the Jews commenced with Abraham, who it appears had such an horrid idea of the attributes of the deity as to have been in the act of sacrificing his own and only son to the caprice of his own imagination. When the descendants of Abraham had become sufficiently numerous to shake off the yoke of the



Egyptians, they commenced their mad and bloody career under the mask of worshipping the only true God, and extirpating all the nations around who differed with them. No sooner had Mahomet attracted a sufficient number of followers, than he commenced a similar career to the descendants of Abraham, and whereby his authority reached he destroyed all those who did not embrace his tenets. The Christians of Europe feeling strength within themselves, were actuated in their turn, by the same spirit, and quitted their own territories in arms, and in immense numbers, to exterminate the followers of Mahomet; so that it is an incontrovertible fact, that whenever any sect or party became more powerful than their neighbours, they have invariably taken up arms to destroy the weaker party.

*The Jews.*—Seldon says, “~~That~~ what you will of the Jews, that they are cursed, they thrive wherever they come: they are able to oblige the prince of their country by lending him money; none of them beg; they keep together; and for their being hated, my life for yours, christians hate one another as much.” This was true, but is also true, that three quarters of a century have not elapsed since hatred to the Jews was a national feeling. In 1753, a bill was brought into the house of lords for naturalizing the Jews, and relieving them from persecuting disabilities. It passed there on the ground that it would operate to the public advantage, by encouraging wealthy persons professing the Jewish religion to remove hither from foreign parts to the increase of the capital, commerce, and credit of the kingdom. The corporation of London, in common council assembled, petitioned against it on the ground that it would dishonour the christian religion, endanger the constitution, and prejudice the interest and trade of the kingdom in general, and London in particular. A body of London merchants and traders also petitioned against it. Certain popular orators predicted that if the bill passed, the Jews would multiply so fast, become so rich, and get so much power, that their persons would be revered, their customs be imitated, and Judaism become the fashionable religion; they farther alleged that the bill flew in the face of prophecy, which declared that the Jews should be scattered without a country or fixed habitation till their conversion, and that in short it was the duty of christians to be unchristian. But the bill passed the commons after violent debates, and received the royal sanction. The nation was instantly in a ferment of horror and execration; and on the first day of the next session of parliament, ministers were constrained to bring in a bill to repeal the act of naturalization, and to the foul dishonour of the people of England at that period, the bill was repealed. From that hour to the present, the Jews have been subjected to their old pains, penalties, disqualifications, and privations. The enlightenment of this age has dispelled much of the darkness of the last. Yet the errors of the public opinion respecting the Jews, remain to be rectified now by the solemn expression of a better public opinion. Formerly, if one of the “ancient people” had said in the imploring language of the slave, “Am I not a man and a brother?” he might have been answered, “you are not a *man*, but a *Jew*.” It is not the business of the Jews to petition for justice, but it is the duty of christians to be just.

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